

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: RO IS SHUM PINT EEWT
SUBJECT: ROMANIAN CHIEF RABBI'S THIRTIETH ANNIVERSARY
CELEBRATION

1. SUMMARY. CELEBRATION OF CHIEF RABBI ROSEN'S THIRTIETH ANNIVERSARY IN HARNESS, BEGINNING JULY 3 AND ECHOING AWAY ONLY NOW, WAS MARKED BY SPECTACULAR FOREIGN REPRESENTATION, WITH ISRAELI AND AMERICAN COMMUNITIES FIELDING PARTICULARLY STRONG AND IMPRESSIVE CONTINGENTS. AMBASSADOR WAS WELL-RECEIVED AT JULY 3 MAIN SYNAGOGUE CEREMONY AND IN TURN RECEIVED MANY DELEGATES AT JULY 4 RECEPTION, AND SOME OTHERS PRIVATELY; DCM ACCOMPANIED ON JULY 5-6 MOLDAVIAN COMMUNITIES TOUR. GUESTS LEFT SKEPTICAL OF REALITY AND VIABILITY OF FREE JEWISH LIFE IN ROMANIA, JUST AS THEY HAD COME, BUT CONTINUOUS EXPOSURE TO MULTIPLE MANIFESTATIONS OF AUTHENTIC ROMANIN JEWISH TRADITIONS AND PEOPLE DENTED SKEPTICISM SOMEWHAT FOR MANY: DISPLAY WAS OBVIOUSLY STAGE-MANAGED, BUT COULD NOT BE FABRICATED. ASKED BY COLLEAGUE WHEN SOMEONE WOULD SAY EMPEROR (ROSEN) HAS NO CLOTHES, ONE DELEGATE REPLIED HE HAS QUITE A FEW. MAJOR US ORGANIZATION REPS SAID HEAT IS OFF ON ROMANIAN MFN/EMIGRATION LINK THIS YEAR, IF ONLY BECAUSE

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THEY HAVE BIGGER FISH TO FRY IN USSR. END SUMMARY.

2. THIRTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF DR. MOSES ROSEN'S INCUMBENCY AS ROMANIAN CHIEF RABBI WAS MARKED BY EXTENSIVE CELEBRATIONS BEGINNING JULY 3: SOLEMN CEREMONY AT MAIN BUCHAREST SYNAGOGUE (CORAL), COCKTAIL AT ROSENS' AND MUSICAL PERFORMANCE AND MEAL AT JEWISH

COMMUNITY CENTER THAT DAY; BANQUET AT INTERCONTINENTAL JULY 4; TRIP TO MOLDAVIAN COMMUNITIES JULY 5-6; AND REST AND RECREATION AT POIANA BRASOV THEREAFTER. LAST GUESTS NOW LEAVING BUCHAREST.

3. ROMANIAN NON-JEWISH PARTICIPATION WAS HIGH-LEVEL. DEPARTMENT OF CULTS DIRECTOR ROSIANU AND ROMANIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH NO. 2 ANTONIE SPOKE AT JULY 3 CEREMONY, WITH DE FACTO DEPUTY DIRECTOR POPESCU AND HEADS OF MOST RECOGNIZED CONGREGATIONS IN AUDIENCE. BUT ATTENDANCE WAS ALSO STRIKINGLY INTERNATIONAL. CHIEF RABBIS OR HEADS OF COMMUNITIES FOR MOST EUROPEAN COUNTRIES (FRANCE, BRITAIN, SWITZERLAND, NORWAY, SWEDEN, SPAIN, HUNGARY, YUGOSLAVIA, GDR, POLAND, AND CZECHOSLOVAKIA) AND REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA WERE IN ATTENDANCE. STAR WAS FRENCH COMMUNITIES FEDERATION PRESIDENT BARON ALAIN DE ROTHSCHILD. SOVIET DELEGATION ANNOUNCED NON-ATTENDANCE ONLY AT LAST MINUTE.

4. NEVERTHELESS, ISRAELI AND AMERICAN CONTINGENTS WERE STRONGEST AND MOST IMPRESSIVE. ISRAELI REPRESENTATIVES INCLUDED MINISTER OF INTERIOR JOSEPH BURG (NATIONAL RELIGIOUS PARTY), CHIEF (ASHKENAZI) RABBI GOREN, HIS SON-IN-LAW CHIEF HAIFA RABBI COHEN, HEAD OF HAIFA RELIGIOUS COUNCIL AND ECUMENICAL SPRINKLING OF HISTADUT AND LABOR PARTY LUMINARIES AND EX-LUMINARIES. FORMER JEWISH AGENCY MEMBER RABBI KIRSCHBLUM, AN AMERICAN LIVING LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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IN ISRAEL, FELL SOMEWHERE IN BETWEEN. AMERICAN GROUP WAS MOST NUMEROUS OF ALL. THIRTY-TWO MEMBER DELEGATION (INCLUDING WIVES) FROM ANTI-DEFAMATION LEAGUE OF BNAI BRITH SHEPHERDED BY DAVID BRODY ARRIVED EARLY, LEFT JULY 3. UHS EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT GAYNOR JACOBSON ARRIVED JULY 2, LEFT JULY 5. PARIS-BASED AJC EUROPEAN REPRESENTATIVE ABE KARLAKOV AND NY ASSOCIATE IRA SILVERMAN WERE IN BUCHAREST SAME PERIOD. APPEAL OF CONSCIENCE FOUNDATION CHAIRMAN RABBI ARTHUR SCHNEIER (WHO CAME WITH TWO ASSOCIATES, SECRETARY-TREASURER AND FORMER REPRESENTATIVE FRANCIS E. DORN AND VICE PRESIDENT FATHER THURSTON N. DAVIS) LEFT JULY 13.

5. IN BETWEEN, US RABBINICAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL REPRESENTATION WAS PROBABLY LARGEST EVER SEEN IN THESE PARTS. BESIDES THOSE LISTED IN PARA 3 ABOVE, IT INCLUDED RABBIS SOLOMON TRAU (PRESIDENT OF THE UNION OF ORTHODOX JEWISH CONGREGATIONS), NISSAN SHULMAN (RABBI OF 5TH AVENUE SYNAGOGUE IN NEW YORK), HERSHEL SCHACTER (PAST CHAIRMAN OF PRESIDENT'S CONFERENCE), BARUCH SILVERSTEIN (PRESIDENT OF NEW YORK BOARD OF RABBIS), PAUL HIAT (EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT OF BOARD). PRESENT IN ADDITION WERE RABBI

GOTTSCHALK (REFORMED, PRESIDENT OF HEBREW UNION COLLEGE); PROFESSOR LEWIN OF YESHIVA UNIVERSITY; TD FEDER, JDC EUROPEAN REPRESENTATIVE IN GENEVA, WHO SPOKE AT SOME LENGTH ABOUT JOINT'S CONTRIBUTION TO ROMANIA'S JEWISH COMMUNITY AT JULY 3 CEREMONY; AND GEORGE BOOKBINDER, ACTIVE FOR MANY YEARS IN AREA JEWISH AFFAIRS. MOST WERE WITH WIVES, MANY WITH CHILDREN.

6. AMBASSADOR WAS SEATED ON PODIUM AT FIRST MARATHON CEREMONY AT CORAL (10:00 A.M. - 3:30 P.M.), AND RECEIVED LONGEST APPLAUSE OF ANY GUEST INTRODUCED. IN ADDITION, HE RECEIVED SCHNEIR AND KARLAKOV PRIVATELY, AND CHATTED WITH MANY OTHER ATTENDEES AT JULY 4 RECEPTION. DCM LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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HOSTED RECEPTION FOR ADL GROUP JULY 1, ATTENDED ALL THREE JULY 3 FUNCTIONS AND ACCOMPANIED GROUP FEATURING BURG, ROTHSCHILD AND MOST OF AMERICAN RABBIS IN ADDITION TO ROSEN ON JULY 5-6 TOUR OF FOUR MOLDAVIAN COMMUNITIES (IASI, BOTOSANI, DOROHOI AND SUCEAVA).

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7. MANY CONVERSTATIONS WITH DELEGATES OF MANY DIFFERENT JEWISH PERSUASIONS OVER LAST DAYS REVEALED PREDICTABLE

SKEPTICISM OVER REALITY AND VIABILITY OF FREE JEWISH LIFE IN ROMANIA UNDER COMMUNISM (AND ROSEN). ISRAELIS IN PARTICULAR LEFT AS THEY HAD COME, CONVINCED THAT ONLY STATE OF ISRAEL OFFERS FULL SCOPE FOR GENUINE DEVELOPMENT OF JEWISH LIFE AND CULTURE, FOR INDIVIDUALS AS WELL AS COMMUNITIES. AT SAME TIME, INTENSITY OF RECEPTION BY ROMANIAN JEWS IN BUCHAREST AND IN PARTICULAR IN MOLDAVIA, TOGETHER WITH REPEATED DEMONSTRATIONS THAT AUTHENTIC JEWISH COMMUNITY LIFE STILL EXISTS HERE, MADE A DENT FOR MANY. GUESTS WERE EXPOSED TO -- EVEN BOMBARDED BY -- SUCCESSION OF YOUNG AND OLD ROMANIAN JEWS SPEAKING YIDDISH, SINGING HEBREW AND YIDDISH SONGS IN COMMUNITY CENTERS AND WORKING SYNAGOGUES, AND SPEAKING THEIR MINDS TO VISITORS. AND, WHILE IT WAS OBVIOUSLY STAGE-MANAGED FOR VISITORS' BENEFIT, IT JUST AS OBVIOUSLY WAS GENUINE: PEOPLE AND PLACES COULD NOT BE FABRICATED FROM WHOLE CLOTH. EXCHANGE BETWEEN TWO DELEGATES DURING INTERMINABLE SPEECHIFYING IN PRAISE OF CHIEF RABBI SUMMED IT UP: QUESTION WAS WHEN SOMEONE WOULD SPEAK OUT AND SAY EMPEROR (ROSEN) HAS NO CLOTHES; REPLY WAS THAT IN FACT HE HAS QUITE A FEW. ON ATTITUDE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OF MAJOR US JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS TO ROMANIAN MFN-JEWISH EMIGRATION LINK, MOST KNOWLEDGEABLE DELEGATES ALSO ANSWERED THAT HEAT IS OFF THIS YEAR, IF ONLY BECAUSE THERE IS BIGGER FISH TO FRY IN USSR. AGGREY

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